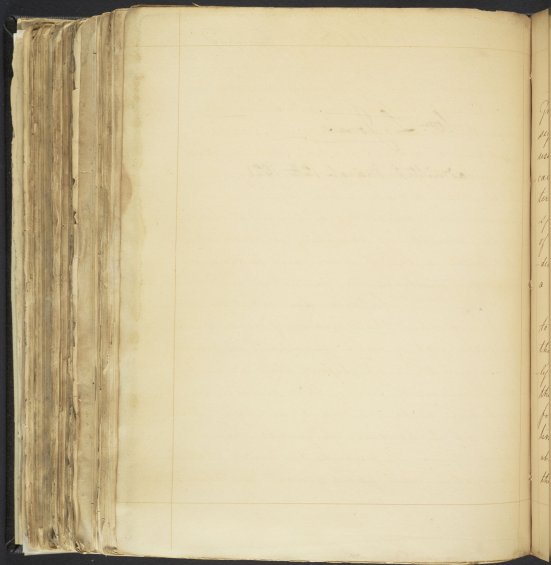


Epilopy

*17

Wm. L. Jones

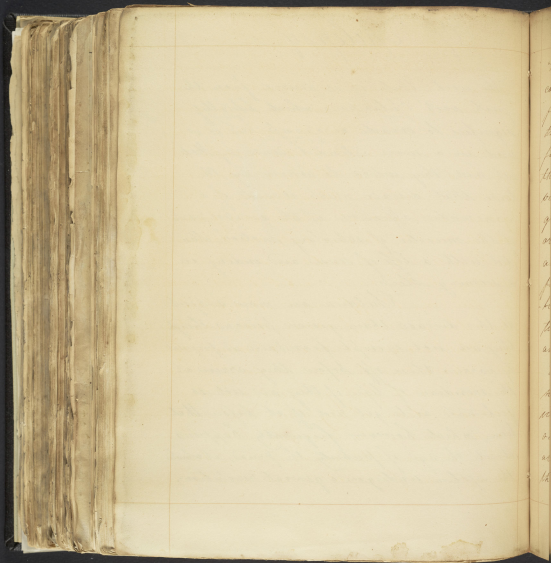
admitted March 12th 1821



Of Epilepsy

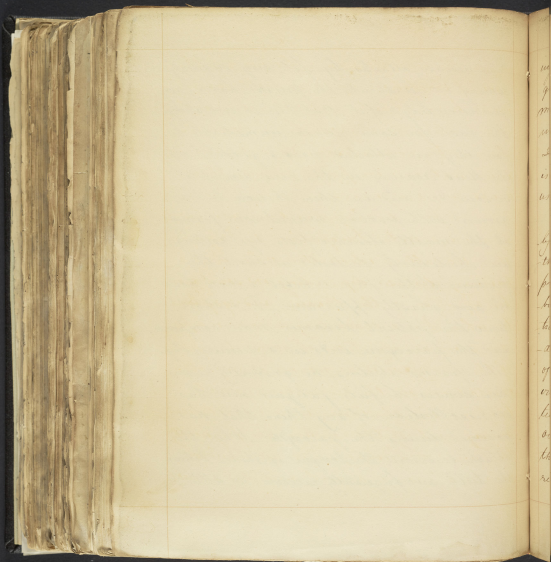
The word Epilepsy is derived from the Greek verb Epilambanein, which literally signifies to invade or oppress, but it is used in a more extended sense by Medical men; They intend to convey by the term that disease which consists of a spasmodic affection of the greater part of the muscles of voluntary motion attended with a loss of sense and ending in a seeming sleep.

Children are more subject to this disease than grown persons though they are not exempt from it, and it frequently carries them off before they arrive at the meridian of life, if they are not so fortunate as to get rid of it before that time, which however frequently happens about the age of puberty, the period at which the system undergoes a general resolution.



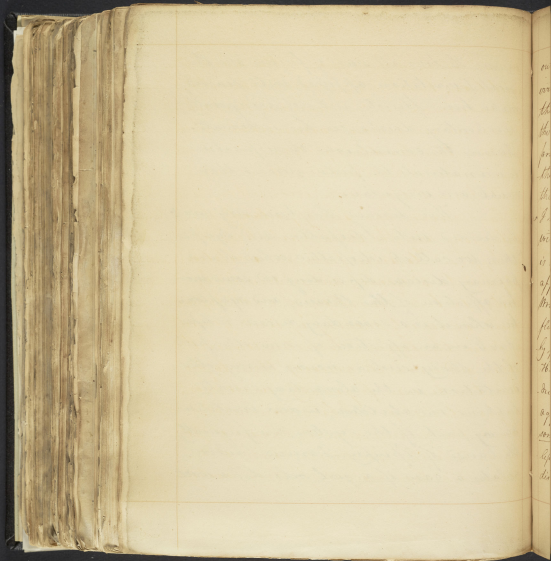
The disease attacks, by fits, very suddenly, coming on without the person's having any foreknowledge of it. But this is not always the case, for some persons immediately before they are attacked have a giddiness in the head, roaring in the ears, dimness of vision &c, and are then thrown to the ground with violent convulsions, foaming at the mouth, clenched fists, eyes rolling and hideously distorted, in short the features of the face exhibit a most horrible and ghastly appearance. In a short time the patient becomes more composed and the paroxysm ends in a sleeping sleep.

The spasm abating, he gradually recovers his senses, he feels fatigued, and has no recollection of any thing that has occurred during the paroxysm. When the attack is severe, the tongue is thrust between the teeth, and frequently receives no little

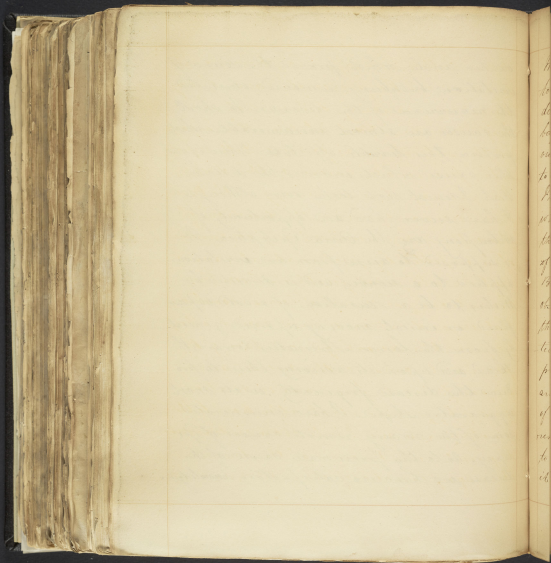


injury, he loses all sense of feeling and the
greatest irritation applied, will scarcely
make him flinch, and not infrequently
involuntarily discharges his excrements.
During the convulsions the respiration
is unnatural, the pulse quicker than
usual and irregular.

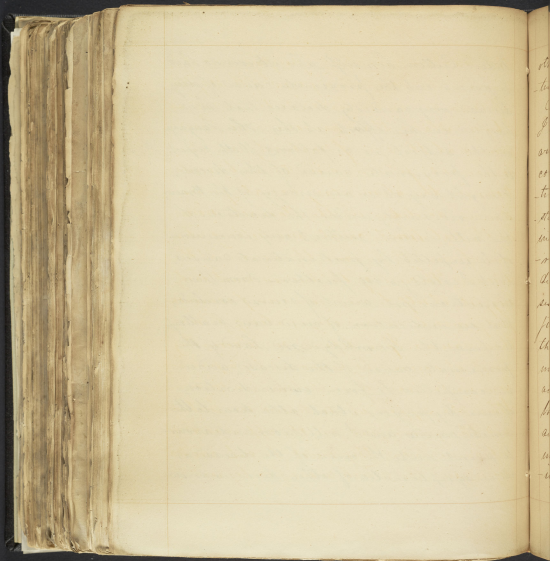
This disease has been very correctly
divided into Idiopathic and Sympto-
matic; we call it idiopathic when it is a
primary disease, depending on some mor-
bid affection of the Brain, and sympto-
matic, when it is a secondary disease or depen-
dant on an affection of some other part
of the Body such as worms or any other
irritation in the alimentary canal,
feething in children, indeed irritation
on any part of the system, are frequently
the cause of Epilepsy. I now, I believe,
relates a case of a girl, who had a worst



ow her angle, which proved the source of
irritation, but being removed, obviated
the recurrence of the disease. In short
the causes are almost innumerable which
produce this terrible affection. There is ano-
ther cause which induces the disease,
that I must not look over although
I have never had an opportunity of
witnessing viz. the *Aura Epileptica*. It
is supposed to arise from an irritation
applied to a nerve, and is described by
Moles to be a sensation of a cold vapour
fluid, or insect moving upward, general-
ly from the lower extremities towards the
head, and upon its arriving there to pro-
duce the disease frequently, in its most
aggravated shape. I have enumerated
some of the many remote causes of Epi-
lepsy, As to the proximate cause of the
disease we have no satisfactory knowledge.

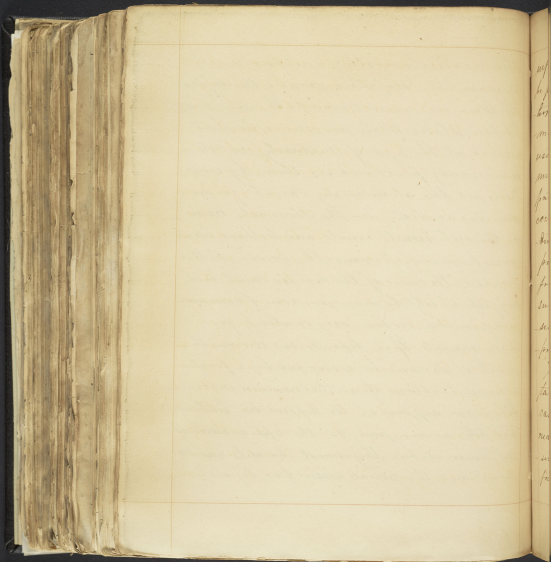


Indeed Cullen himself who strives so hard
to point out the proximate cause of every
disease, very candidly declares that he is
baffled in his efforts at this. His language
on the subject is as follows. "With respect
to the proximate cause of this disease,
I might say it is an energy of the Brain,
which, ordinarily, under the direction of
the will, is here, without any concurrence
of it, impelled by preternatural causes,
But I could go no further." From these
observations we must of course conclude,
that no indication of cure can be attempt-
ed from the knowledge we have of the
proximate cause of the disease, and we
are compelled to form our indications
of cure by paying strict attention to the
remote causes, and I will now endeavour
to point out the cure of the disease as
it is symptomatic of other diseases or in



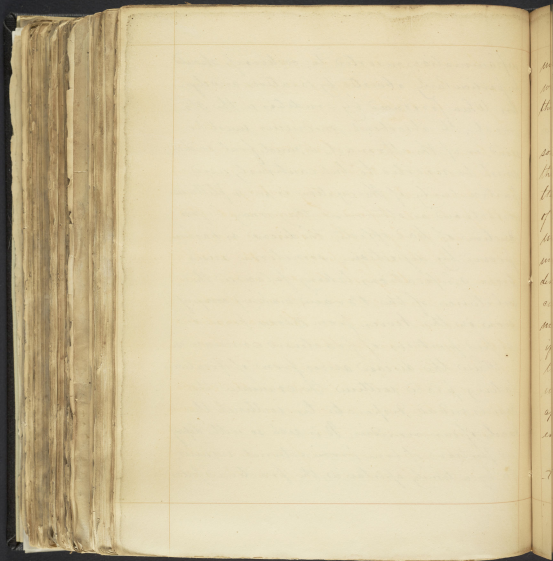
other words Sympathic Epilepsy, and of
towards the Idiopathic form of the complaint.

Children are more liable to the disease, as
I before stated, than persons who have
arrived at the age of maturity, and it is
commonly produced in them, by irrita-
tions in the alimentary canal, for in-
stance, acidity in the Stomach, worms
in the intestinal canal, and teething, like-
wise frequently from the source of the
disease, the cure of the disease must easily
suggest itself to any person of common
judgement, when originating from
those causes. If it depends on worms, they
must of course be removed by a proper
administration of anthelmintic medicines,
When we suppose it to depend on teething
and the gums put on the appearance of
inflammation, they must be cut, and sea-
sued, and the usual means for topical



inflammation resorted to, costiveness should
be particularly obviated by laxatives and ely-
sters. When produced by crudities in the Sto-
mach, the absorbent medicines must be
used, or if the Stomach is much foul, emetics
must be resorted to, but cautiously, used,
particularly, if the system is in a plethoric
condition, as otherwise, they may be pro-
ductive of bad effects. The disease, as has been
proved by dissection, sometimes arises
from suppurations taking place in the
substance of the Brain, making compres-
sion on the Nerves, from Ulcers, from de-
pressed portions of fractured craniums.

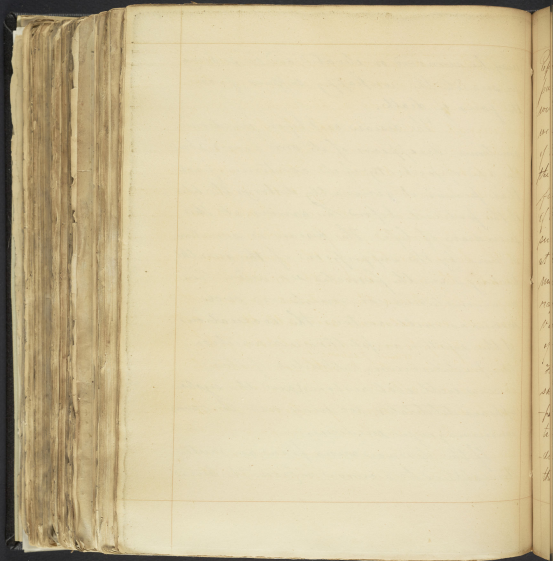
When the disease arises from suppurations
taking place within the cranium, the
case is indeed desperate, & without the
reach of our remedies. It is not so with de-
pressed portions of bone from external injuries,
for by a timely assistance, the fractured piece



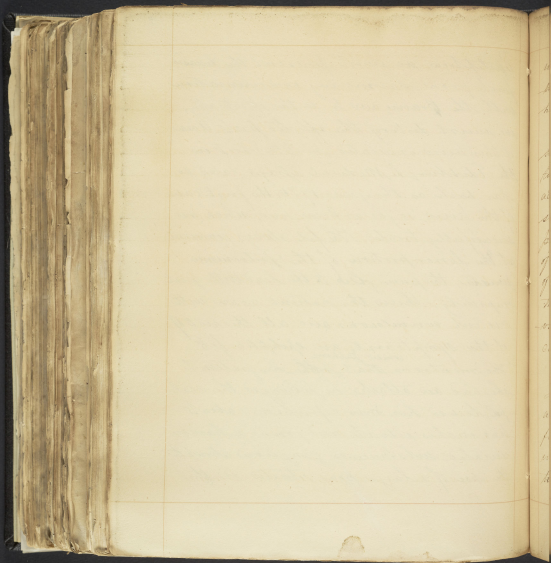
may be removed or elevated, and in so doing
we snatch the unhappy sufferer from
the jaws of death.

The disease as I before mentioned
sometimes disappears of its own accord about
the age of puberty; if it continues past
that period, it generally destroys the life
of the patient before he arrives at the
precipitous of life. The disease is sometimes
induced by the suppression of the monthly
discharge in the female sex, under these
circumstances, we must use such
means as will restore the evacuation,
if the system is plethoric, venesection,
the pedicularium, cathartics if these
means will not restore, and the system
appears debilitated, we may use the various
emmenagogue medicines.

If the disease arises from an irrita-
tion applied to a nerve, or from the Aura



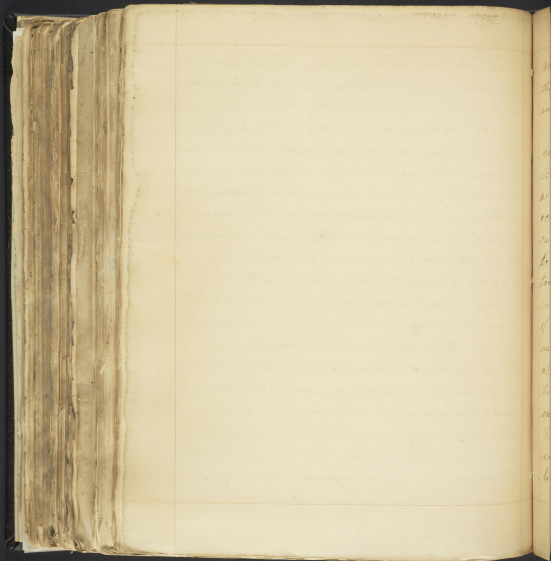
Epileptics, we must prevent the diseased
parts from having any communication
with the Brain, and to do this effectually,
we must destroy the affected parts. A case
of this kind is related by Dr. Short in
the Edinburgh Medical Essays, dated so
far back as the year 1720, the first case
of the kind, so far as I can find, which was
successfully treated. The fit always commenced
at the lower portion of the Gastrocnemius
muscle, the pain flew to the head with great
rapidity. There the patient down with
violent convulsions and all the rest of
the symptoms of an epileptic fit.
The mentioner that ^{which fathering} with his patient
she had an attack, he plunged the scal-
pel (to use his own expression) about
two inches into it, and found a hard in-
durated substance or ganglion about the
the size of a large pea, situated on the



nerve which he extracted, the person immediately recovered and never afterwards had a recurrence of the fit.

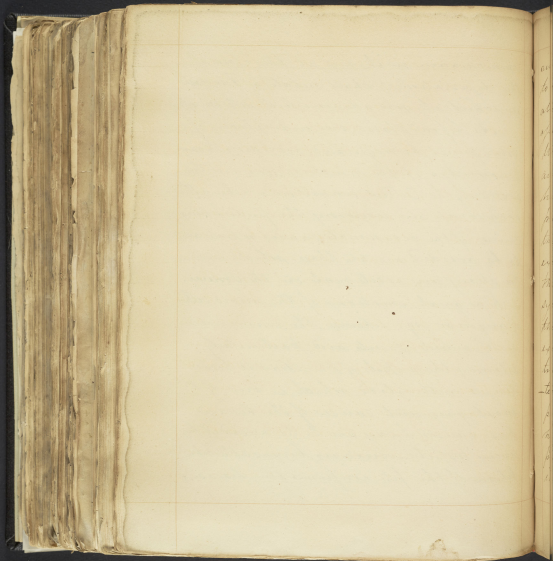
All violent emotions of the mind, such as joy, anger, &c. have been known to cause the disease, in such cases we must advise the patient to restrain from such sudden fits of excitement as much as possible. I might extend the treatment of Epilepsy when it is symptomatic of other diseases to a great length, but I think it unnecessary as it must be obvious to every one that by removing the cause the effect will vanish.

I come now to the treatment of Idiopathic Epilepsy, and am sorry to acknowledge that our treatment of it, is so frequently unsuccessful. My principal intention in writing on this disease, was to show the good effects of Opium.

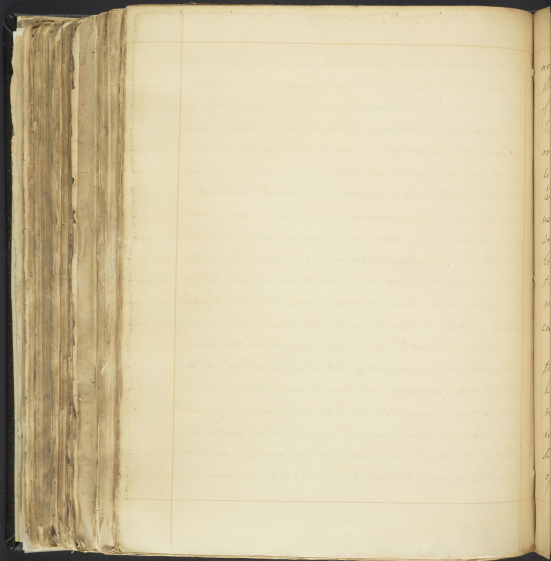


Ammoniacum in it; and at the close of the dissertation, I shall relate a few cases in which it was administered with success.

In these states, our indications of cure must be regulated according to our knowledge of the remote causes, and these according to Cullen, consist in removing the occasional, and removing the predisposing cause; if the occasional causes which are to be avoided are all those which produce too strong an exertion on the Brain, such as great emotions of the mind, either of anger or joy; likewise the immoderate use of ardent spirits, and particularly in allowing the vessels of the head to become tinged with blood which is one of the most frequent causes of the disease. These causes, I say are to be avoided by every possible means, because the repetition of the fits confirms the disease.

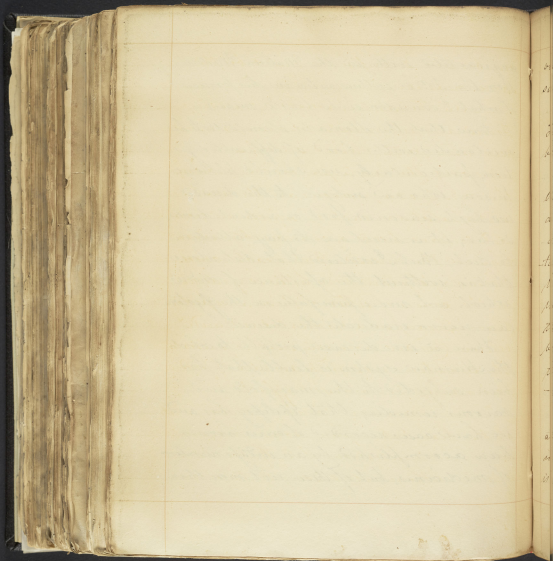


and where this happens it is difficult to remove it, which however must be attempted by destroying, if possible, the associated motions which keep it up. When the system is in a phlogistic state, and we suppose a determination to the head of the sanguinous fluid, to be the predisposing cause, we must remove this cause by venesection in its fullest extent - by purgatives - and by the rest of the depletory measures, and after the system is reduced we must keep it in this state by a low diet and moderate exercise. Doct^r Folmergill says in his treatise on epilepsy that the strict attention must be paid to the diet of persons subject to the disease, indeed he goes so far as to say that a proper plan of diet, is of much more importance in the cure, than any thing we are



acquainted with in the *Materna Medica*.
 Now the Dr. is enthusiastic in his praise
 of what I consider such false means -
 To know that the Stomach should not be
 overloaded with food of difficult diges-
 tion, particularly, nor should phlegmic
 persons who are subject to the disease
 use high seasoned food or acid drinks,
 so far, it is most anxious to pay attention
 to diet. But I contend that diet alone,
 that is, without the assistance of remedies
 which act more powerfully on the system,
 can never eradicate the disease.

There is our disease, probably to which
 the Human system is liable, that has
 been subjected to the manifold and
 various remedies that Epilepsy has, and
 we have cases recorded of cures having
 been accomplished by an indefinite number
 of medicines, but of these, not more than

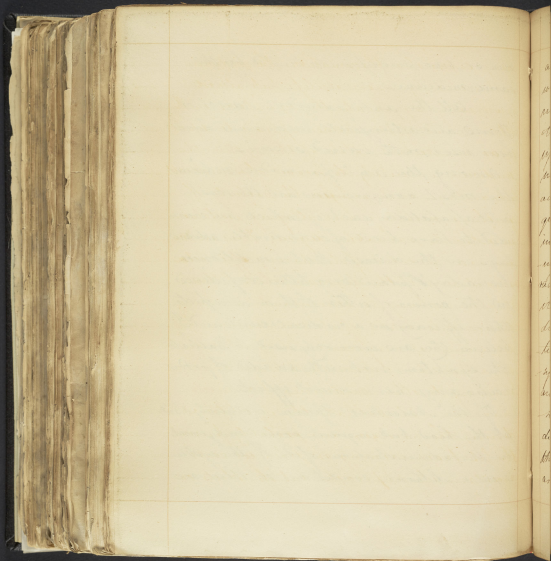


one or two successfully treated by the same medicine.

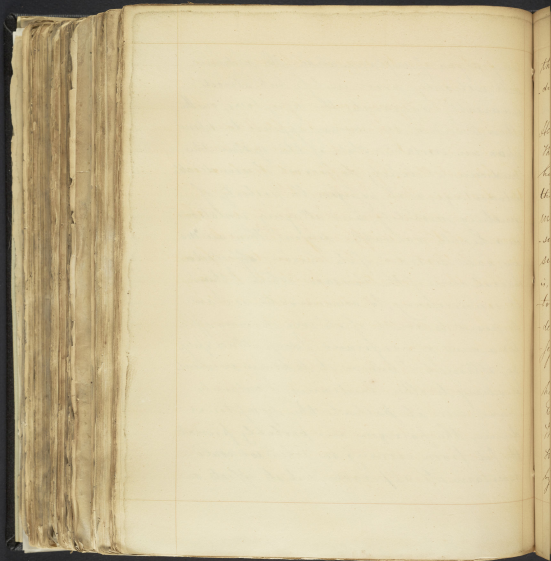
All the anti-spasmodic, narcotic, Tonic, and astringent medicines have been used with varied success.

Among the anti-spasmodic medicines the most conspicuous are the musk, and opasahda, each of which are reputed to have been of considerable advantage in the disease. But practitioners nowadays place very little confidence in the powers of either of them, as respects their efficacy in a radical cure; and I believe they are now only used to palliate the symptoms, not with an idea of producing any permanent effects.

Of the Narcotics, Opium certainly stands at the head, but requires some judgement in the administration of it. If the system is in a plethoric condition, or there are



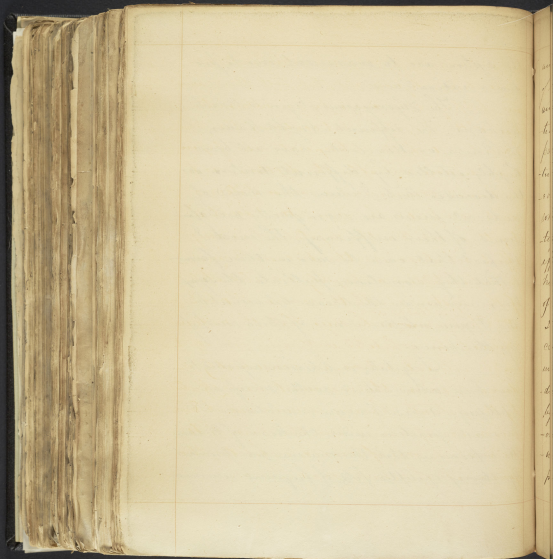
any signs of inflammation, the medicine will not only prove useful, but almost invariably aggravate the symptoms, on the other hand if the disease appears to depend upon an irritable state of the system, the medicine is likely to prove of considerable advantage, as it possesses the property of quieting mobility, and allaying irritation in a highly valuable degree; there are many cases recorded of its having effected a radical cure of the disease, which I think it unnecessary to enumerate, as I am disposed to doubt of its ever having effected a cure of confirmed Idiosyncrasy, although I believe it to be an excellent auxiliary, to other medicines, I certainly have seen it palliate the symptoms during the paroxysm, and probably prevent the fit from coming on when we could ascertain its approach, but its effects on



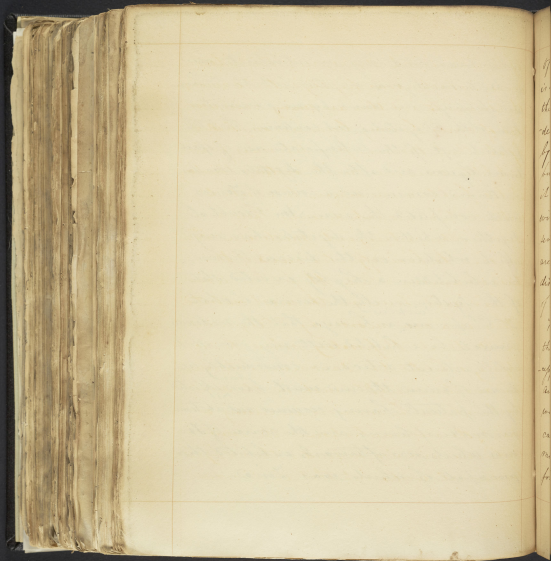
the system are to evanescent ever to produce a radical cure.

The *Hyoscyamus Niger* or Black Henbane, The different Night Shades, the *Pentia* or *Kimlock*, have all been highly extolled by different writers on the disease, But I believe the minds of medical men are more pretty well secured of their inefficacy. The most I suspect that can be said in their favour is, that they sometimes palliate the symptoms, and render the disease less violent, but I question whether some of them occupy less this power.

Digitalis is likewise reported to have been administered with success in Epilepsy - a case of a cure is related in Dr Thomas's practice, under the Head of Mania. He informs us that the mania was preceded by strong epileptic fits, of frequent recurrence.

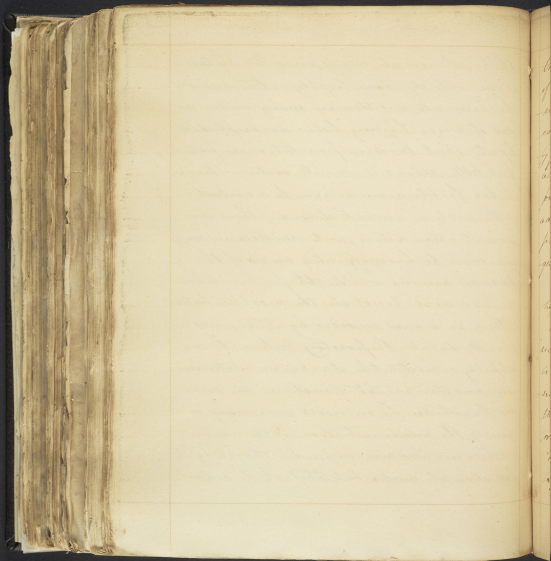


and induced by a long and intemperate use
of spirituous liquors, and that both the Malign
and epileptic, were cured by an administra-
tion of the Digitalis, but continues, that the
patient left off the intemperate use of spi-
rituous liquors, and after the digitalis was dis-
continued, commenced a course of Tonics
which completed the cure. - Nor I doubt al-
together, whether the digitalis had any
effect whatever on the disease. Because,
he exhibited in a highly excited state
of the System, exactly the reverse of what
Dr Chapman ^{teaches us}, as he says, that the medicine
cannot be exhibited with any good effect,
untill arterial action is considerably re-
duced of course the cure must have ^{been} effected
by the patient's having resumed an abste-
mious mode of living, and the course of To-
nics which was afterwards exhibited, the
principal of which was Linn.



Of the Astringent medicines, Mistletoe is one, which was highly extolled among the Ancients and there are many cases recorded of cures having been accomplished by it. But Modern practitioners place but little reliance on its virtues, thinking it too feeble a medicine to combat with such a violent disease, There are several other astringent medicines which are said to have effected cures of the disease among which the preparations of Lead and Zinc are the most celebrated.

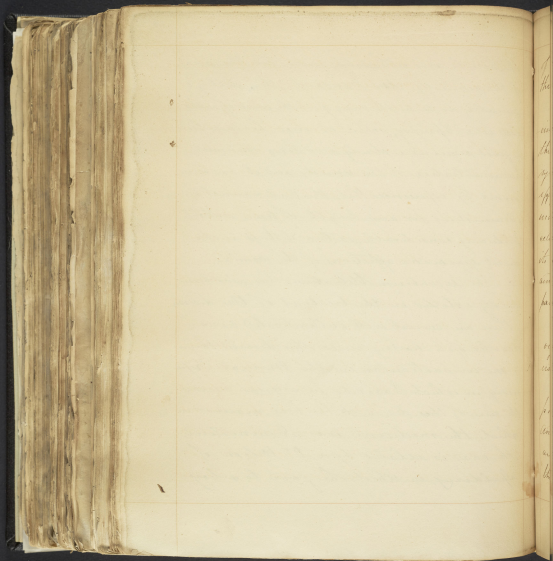
There is a case recorded by Dr Agnew in the Medical Repository, where he successfully exhibited the Saccharum Saturni, and another case by Dr Rush in the same work wherein he succeeded in curing a case by the administration of the same medicine and also suspended the fits by it for several weeks, but that it disordered



the bowels and ultimately prevented the success of the remedy. Now I suspect, this will generally be to be the case, for the cure of a disease like Epilepsy, when it once becomes firmly fixed, requires a steady and long continued administration of the remedy, and it has been proved by experience that the lead cannot be administered for any length of time, without producing considerable gastric distress and frequent spasmodic affections of the bowels.

The Argentum Nitratum has also been highly extolled in the treatment of this disease.

There are several well authenticated cases recorded of its having cured this disease. There is one in particular in the Medical Repository, in which I ascribe in a great measure the cure of this disease to the bold manner in which the medicine was administered. The case is related by a Dr Wilson of Spalding, in which he gave to a boy

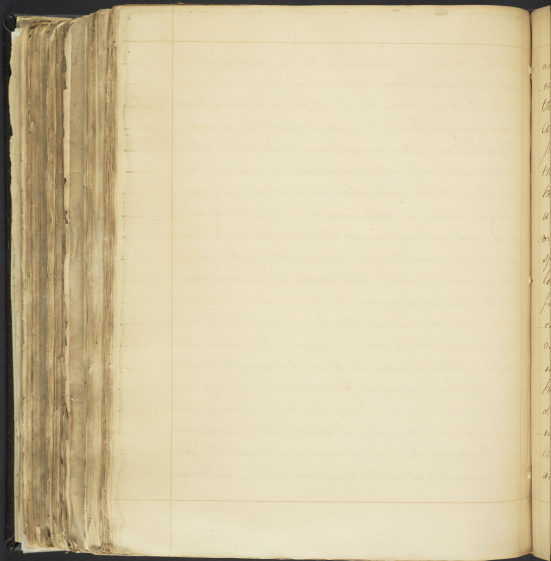


of 10 years old two and a half grains of the medicine three times a day.

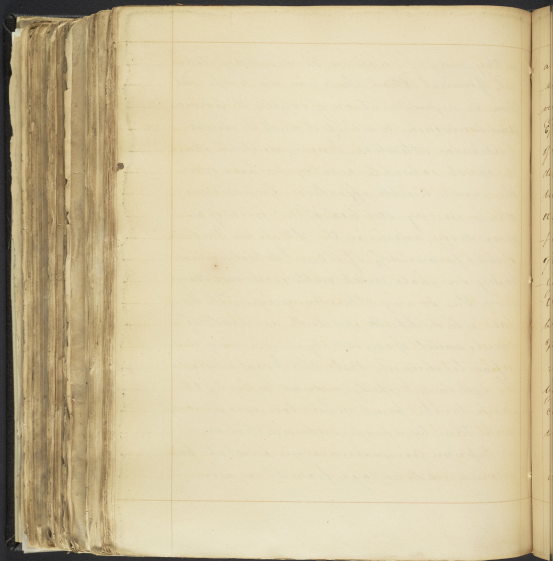
I come now to Tonics, a class of medicines which I think far preferable to all the others, if they are administered when the system is in a proper condition to receive the effects of their valuable powers, almost every individual article in the class, has been celebrated at one period or other to have shown its way over the disease, both vegetable and mineral; but the latter I have almost particular reference to.

The Peruvian Bark is one of the best vegetable tonics, but I believe it is seldom used, although cures have been effected by it.

Of the Mineral Tonics all the different preparations of Iron, Zinc, Copper, Cassia, and Tin if I may class it among those medicines are so celebrated, that it would be for me to relate the cases in which they have been found useful.

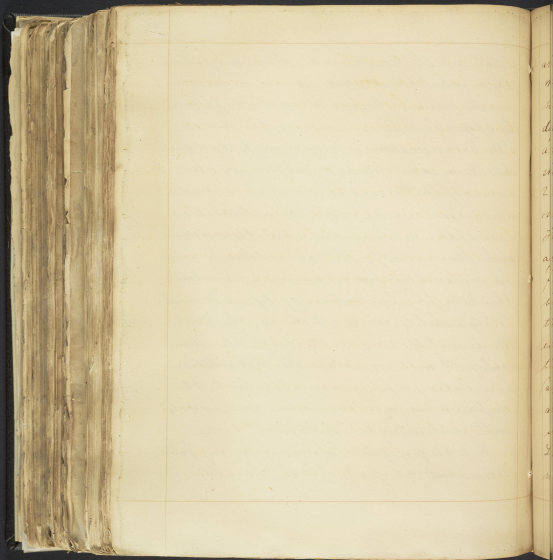


as they may be seen in almost every Medi-
 cal Journal that issues from the press - but
 there is a preparation of copper, the *Cuprum*
Ammoniacum to which I wish to draw
 particular attention, I really do think it is
 the most valuable remedy we have over
 this most terrible affection. Even Cullen
 who is so very sceptical of the effects of al-
 most every article in the *Pharmacia Medica*
 speaks favourably of this, I do not pretend
 to say we shall meet with uniform success
 from this, or any other medicine. The dis-
 ease which depends on such a variety of
 causes, must of course require a very dis-
 tinguished treatment. But, this I say, that after
 the system is properly reduced, or brought
 down to the point where tonics are admit-
 table, then by a proper administration of
 the *Cuprum Ammoniacum*, we shall derive
 as many advantages from it, as from any

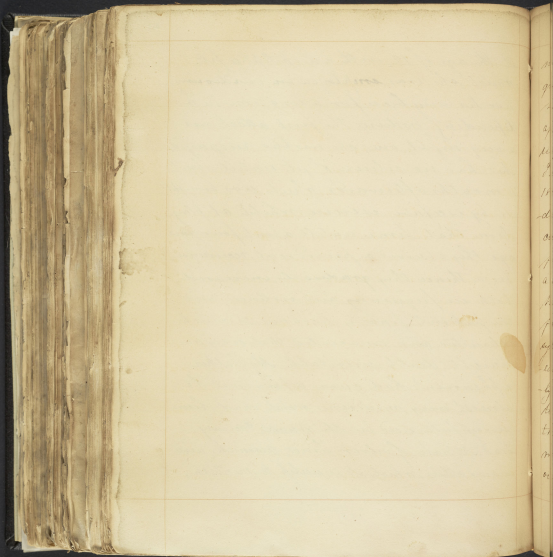


article in the *Matenoo Medica*, and probably more. I believe that the medical art usually palliates the symptoms of Idiopathic Epilepsy and likewise renders the intervals of the paroxysms much longer, unless the disease depends on some internal compression of the nerves of the Brain, such as epistaxis or tumours arising from the internal surface of the Cranium, or within the substance of the Brain itself. The case is then a hopeless one indeed, but we cannot ascertain this to be the fact during life, and must boldly exhibit every article in the *Mat. Med.* untill we finally, if possible, obtain relief. I will now close this dissertation by relating a few cases in which the *cuprum ammoniacum* was presented with distinguished success.

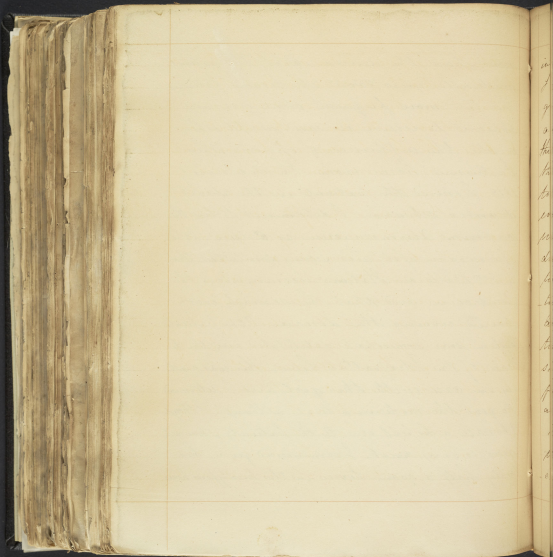
B. a negro girl belonging to my father now about 21 years of age, was attacked



at the age of 12 with an epileptic fit,
whilst she was employed in gardening,
her having been for a long time in a
dependent posture. The first attack was
a very slight one, she was bled and purged,
she had no return of fits untill about
2 months afterwards, which was brought
on by excessive exercise whilst at play.
From that time untill about four years
ago they observed a periodical recurrence,
from thence they gradually increased
both in frequency and violence, and
the patient finally became so much
exhausted and emaciated, that every one
thought death inevitable. My Father
(a physician) had given a fair trial to
almost every medicine which had been
successfully used in the disease, Mercury,
Lead Nitrate of silver, Zinc, Arsenick, and
many others which it is useless to mention,

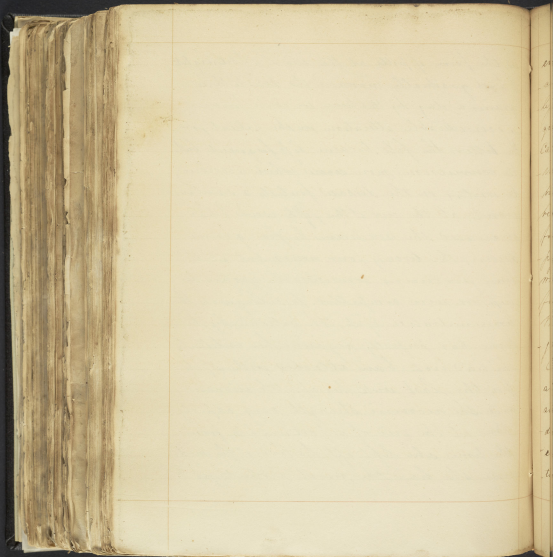


none had the desired effect, the patient gradually grew worse, she became fatigued, her fits more frequent than ever, and appeared to receive no ease except when under the influence of opium. When I returned home from the Lectures of 1818, I found the patient in the above described situation. I determined to try the *cuprum Ammoniacum* as *Edler* spoke favourably of it, and seeing somewhere that a Dr. Balli an Italian recommended the medicine, and that he scarcely ever failed curing the disease, if the patient's system was somewhat debilitated and the disease of the Idiopathic kind. This was exactly the case with this girl, and I determined to give the medicine a trial, although I thought the case a hopeless one, as the patient's stomach was so very weak. I commenced giving her only half a grain twice in the twentyfour hours



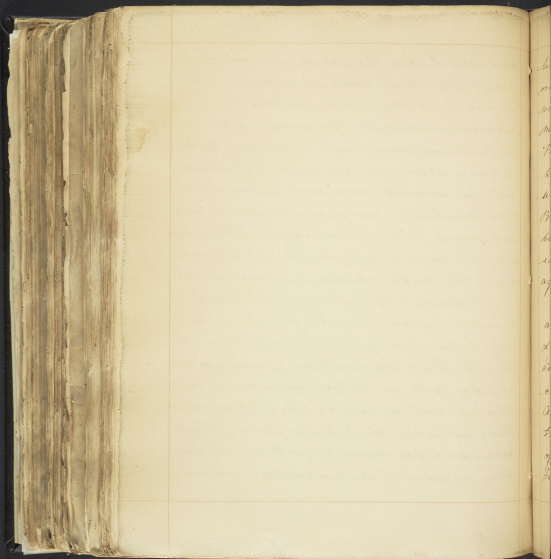
in the form of pills, at the end of a fortnight I had gradually increased the dose to three grains a day, by this time we could perceive a considerable alteration in the patient for the better, the fits became less frequent, but the convulsions more severe, which according to writers on the disease foreshadow a salutary event; at the end of the fifth week I had increased the medicine to five grains during the twenty four hours, but at this time producing considerable gastric distress, we were compelled to relinquish the administration of it, the patient by this time had perfectly regained her intellects, she had not been attacked with a fit for the last week, her appetite increased and she recovered strength very rapidly.

But at the end of a fortnight from the time she left off taking the medicine she had the most violent fit I



ever saw, I really thought she never would recover from the paroxysm she remained in a senseless and stupid state about eighteen hours but gradually recovered, We then gave her a strong Cathartic and commenced the opium anodyne again, and continued it four weeks, but her stomach never could be brought to bear more than four grains during the twenty four hours. It was fortunately one of those happy alterations, if I may use the expression, in which the medicine had a peculiar efficacy for the disease. It has now been little less than two years since the patient has enjoyed the blessing of uninterrupted health.

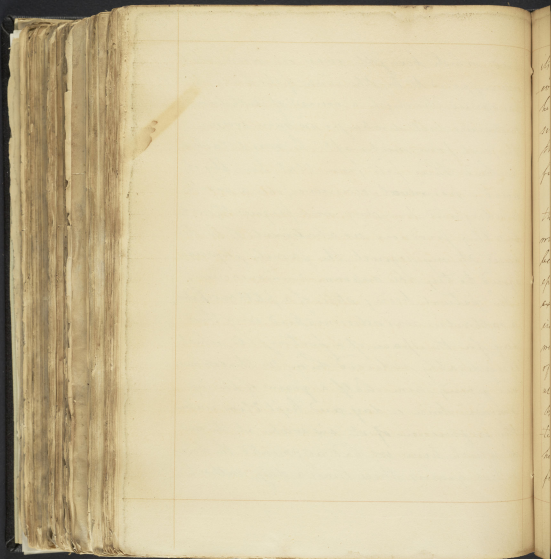
Case 2. A boy about ten years of age whilst at play with his schoolfellows, was suddenly attacked with an epileptic fit, he was immediately carried home and the family Physician sent for, being of phlegmatic disposition, he was bled and a cathartic adminis-



lived, which brought away one worm, which was supposed to be the cause of the delirium, he was carried through a course of Anthelmintic medicines, but discharged no more worms.

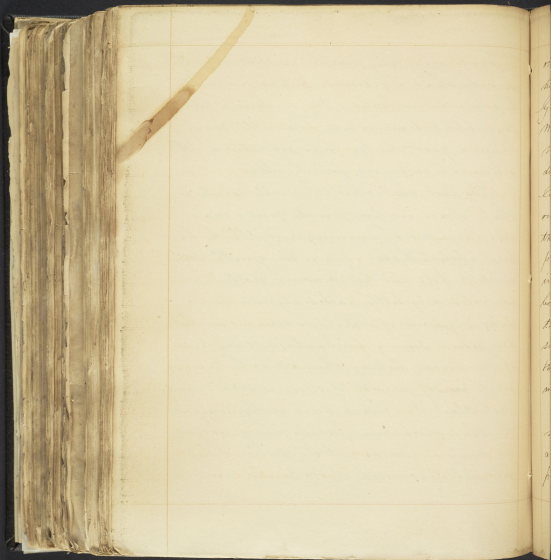
The first four weeks after he was attacked he had three fits, from that time they obtained a periodical occurrence, once a month. Bleeding and purging were frequently used, but they produced no abatement of the disease, at my request the family physician agreed to try the cuprum ammoniacum,

The patient being still of a plethoric habit, a cathartic was administered every third day for the space of a fortnight, which considerably reduced him, we then commenced giving him half a grain of the Cup. Ammon. twice a day, and kept him under the influence of it six weeks, at the end of which time we had augmented the dose to two grains three times a day, without



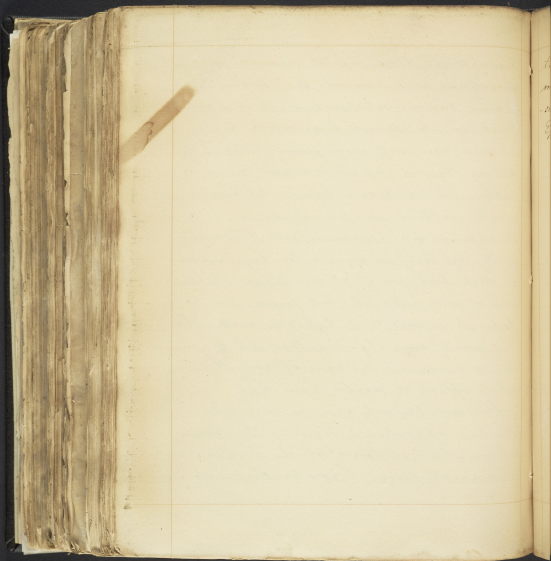
its producing any gastric uneasiness, what-
 ever, he had a fit about two weeks after
 he commenced taking the medicine, but
 since that time, which ^{has} been little more
 than a year, he has had no return of the
 fits, and now enjoys good health.

The last case which I shall relate, is
 that, of an unfortunate young man,
 who is perhaps of immense wealth, he has
 been afflicted ever since his youth with
 epileptic fits, and his widowed mother has
 exercised very little authority over him,
 in consequence of which no decisive measures
 were taken during his boyhood to rid him
 of the disease, hoping that when he arrived
 at the period of puberty, the disease would vanish.
 But Alas! they have been sadly disappoint-
 ed. He is now about twenty four years of age,
 his mind is almost entirely destroyed, his
 fits still occur at stated periods, and when



over of them attack him, it is several days before he returns to his usual situation, immediately after the convulsions cease, he is a perfect maniac. He attempts to do all the injury he can, and not unfrequently attempts to destroy the life of his best and dearest relations. His situation is truly a deplorable one. His mother was prevailed upon to try the cuprum ammoniacum, and it ^{was} exhibited pretty regularly for nine or ten days (and even in that short period it was supposed to have been of some benefit,) but forcing him to take it so much distressed his mother that she, (from a sense of false feeling) left off giving the medicine, and we cannot correctly judge what effect it would have had.

These are the only cases, in which I have had an opportunity of seeing the medicine administered, in two of which it effected a permanent cure. I now conclude with



this remark, That, if the medicine was
more generally used and that boldy Phy-
sicians would cease to think Idiopathic
Epilepsy the opprobrium Medicine.

